

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein the counterions are alkali metal cations.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein the step of providing negatively charged nanotubes comprises adding under anaerobic conditions, a salt of formula:



to the carbon nanotubes, wherein

$A^+$  represents a cation of an alkali metal ion; and

$B^-$  represents an anion of a polyaromatic compound,

so as to electrically charge the nanotubes.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3, wherein the polyaromatic compound is chosen from naphthalene, benzophenone, fluorenone and anthraquinone.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein the polar organic solvent is sulfolane, dimethyl sulfoxide, dimethylformamide, N-methylpyrrolidone or N-methylformamide.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein the carbon nanotubes contain boron atoms in place of carbon atoms.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein the carbon nanotubes are single-walled nanotubes.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein the carbon nanotubes are multi-walled nanotubes.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the carbon nanotubes are hollow nanotubes.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the carbon nanotubes contain molecules, salts, or metal elements inside their hollow interior.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising a step of purifying the nanotubes from the dissolved phase.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising a step of functionalizing the surface or the ends of the nanotubes from the dissolved phase.

Claims 13-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A method of dissolving carbon nanotubes comprising  
(i) providing reduced, negatively charged nanotubes with positive counterions ~~by reducing carbon nanotubes~~; and

(ii) adding a polar organic solvent to the negatively charged nanotubes of step (i), resulting in a dissolved phase of negatively charged nanotubes with positive counterions in the solvent.